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Sora was the capital of a territorial district called Tandougou.

The songs of the gessere, who are the Soninké equivalents of the Bambara dyeli, often tell of Souleiman-ba Kolta, of Sora and Tandougou.

the Bambara came into power, the Soninké called it Dyon-ka-dugu (land of slaves).

Origin

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*173 The tradition which is generally accepted, and which was first reported by Raffenel and Quintin, has it that the ancestors of the Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta came originally from Toron, a region situated at the headwaters of the Milo and the Baoulé, both tributaries of the upper Niger. From there they presumably moved in a northeasterly direction and then spread out toward their present habitat and developed the empires of Ségou and Kaarta (2).

2. "An oft-reported tradition says that the Banmana came from Toron, the eastern province of Oussoulou, situated in the present colony of the Ivory Coast. It was on the route between Odienné and Sikasso, not far from the former. It seems, indeed, likely that the original habitat of the Banmana was located in the extreme southeast corner of the cradle of the Mandé family and that it extended from the right bank of the upper Niger, approximately near Siguiri, to the left bank of the upper Bagbé (or Bagoé), where it touched the territory of the Sénoufo [Senufo] people. The first conquests of the Mandingue [Mondingo]

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M 567 category of slaves is also found among the Rimaïbé people of Macina, all of whom may be called Tammoura or Tamboura.

B *173 This group was that of the Boula, who made a fortune from both M 173 Soumangourou and Soun Dyata by supporting alternately the one or the other until Soun Dyata finally prevailed.

These people, who are called Mandinké by the Soninké, M 101 Maninka by the Bambara, and Mallinké by the Peul, call themselves Mandinga. It should be noted, however, that the Mandinké 173 do not date from the thirteenth century empire of the Kelta but B *173 are rather of earlier origin than that clan. It is my opinion that they derive originally from very ancient Soninké clan groups in the process of breaking up, from which they acquired their essential elements and their name. The name, indeed, refers to a social group which is identical with that of the furu-ba-dyon', described hereafter in Chapter 5, and the same group was established in the same way by the Bambara, i.e., by the Blacks, the natives of various races. In any event, this is said in the traditions told to me.

M ● B ● 174 Furthermore, I do not think that all the Bambara peoples who today occupy the area under consideration are accounted for by the migrations of the Bambara-speaking Bambara from the aforesaid Mandé region at the time when the Kelta clan took over that region in the thirteenth century. I believe that, in the geographical region known to us under the names Mandé, Toron, Baninko, Ségou, Bélédougou and Kaarta, there have been Bambara-speaking Bambara since well before the thirteenth century.

The Kouloubali

B *173 The migrations of which the traditionists tell us invariably refer only to the movements of [17] certain families who were more or less important and who had usually figured prominently in clan affairs. As far as Ségou and Kaarta are concerned, the traditions apply solely to the Kouloubali chiefs of these clans and clearly indicate that they found other similar Bambara families already long settled in these and surrounding regions.

II. History

A. Origins of the Bambara People

174 Where do the historical Bambara people come from, that is, the people who installed themselves on the banks of the Niger to form the kingdoms of Ségou, Bélédougou, Kaarta, and who are more or less known to us through certain Arab chronicles (Tarikh-es-Soudan [History of Sudan], 1665, Tarikh-el-Fettach [History of Fettach], 1670, chronicles of Néma and Oualata, translated in 1927) or through certain explorer's reports (Mungo Park, Raffenel, etc.)?

According to a tradition reported by Delafosse, the Bambara came from Toron, an eastern province of Ouassoulou, situated in the present-day Ivory Coast, on the route from Odienné to Sikasso. Tauxier has shown that this tradition confused two events separated by a rather long period of time.

1) The slow descent in a southeast to northwest direction of Bambara masses coming, doubtless, from the Bougouni-Sikasso region (where they are still very numerous) down to the Niger, which they undoubtedly reached about the twelfth century.

2) An invasion of the Peul of Macina, who, in the seventeenth century, overran the Bambara masses and organized them into a kingdom in the Ségou region before crossing the Niger and advancing in an east-west direction. These Peul supposedly originated in a city named Torone, explaining the possible error by Delafosse.

Naturally, none of these regions was deserted before the arrival [46] of the Bambara. The original inhabitants of Ségou were Bozo fishermen who came from the north (seventh century). At the same time as the infiltration of the Bambara from the southeast, there were several invasions from the north by the Soninké, who, richer and more advanced, organized the rough Bambara agriculturalists into chiefdoms. After a short domination by the Soso (twelfth century), the Mali empire spread in the upper valley of the Niger; it is probable that when the empire lost its dynamism the region occupied by the Bambara, mingled with Mandingue, Sénoufo, and Bobo, acquired a certain autonomy (seventeenth century).